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# SECOND LETTER

TO A

# COUNTRY GENTLEMAN.

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# SECOND LETTER,

## &c.

MY DEAR SIR,

YOUR letter of the 29th ult. has reached me.

I thank you for taking mine in good part; and I am not diſſatisfied with the uſe you have made of it. As a compoſition, you have probably much overated it: the true merit of it (if it has merit) is, that it is a faithful expoſition of genuine impreſſions, which a ſober enquiry after truth has made upon a mind which party has not yet jaundiced.

Your

Your obſervation is perfectly juſt. Could I have foreſeen the meaſures which have in fact taken place between the meeting of Parliament on the 12th and the date of your letter, I might have ſpared myſelf the trouble of endeavouring to open your eyes: the miſt of Secret Influence would not have prevented your ſeeing the groſs deception which has been practiſed upon the public, in the application of that term to any of the paſſages which led to the late change in his Majeſty's councils.

I agree that it belongs to the general ſubject of my former letter, to examine into the dangerous and unconſtitutional uſe of the name and authority of the Houſe of Commons, which the Coalition are now making; and as you are pleaſed to impoſe it upon me, I certainly ſhall not decline

decline the taſk of entering into that enquiry. Indeed, ſuch is our ſituation at this moment, that I ſhould reproach myſelf, if I refuſed to lend the aid of my arm, feeble as it is, to aſſiſt in ſupporting a convulſed and tottering ſtate.

A week ago I thought I had made up my mind concerning Mr. F—. I concluded that this man's abilities had been over-valued; that with thoſe wonderful talents for which I gave him credit, there was ſo much alloy mixed, that he was, upon the whole, very much below the ſtandard of a great ſtateſman: in a word, that he ſuffered his paſſions to interfere with his buſineſs.

His hazarding every thing upon his *India* Bill was a ſtrong trait of his political character; but the *faux pas*, as it appeared to me, on the 12th, followed up by the wild

wild reſolution of the 16th, had, I thought, determined it beyond redemption: I had reſolved no more to recommend to him to learn moderation; I thought him TOO OLD to learn.

But when this ſtorm ſubſides at once, and is ſucceeded by a ſudden calm; when the Houſe is adjourned from Monday to Thurſday, and from Thurſday to Monday again, and the impetuous Mr. F— is complimented by Country Gentlemen upon his *moderation*; I begin to perceive that this Gentleman's character is more conſummate than I took it to be: I am obliged to confeſs that he is not violent without *meaſure*; that he can ſtop ſhort at any point of intemperance up to which he has thought it convenient to work his followers; and that he has himſelf, as well as them, under abſolute command.

Such

Such a man, I muſt own, is not to be deſpiſed.

What have we not to fear from a man who could coolly and deliberately precipitate the Houſe of Commons into a ſituation of all others the moſt unnatural, as well as the moſt humiliating?—the being obliged to ſuſtain itſelf in a quarrel with the King, without having the ſupport of the People.

It has ſerved the purpoſes of a faction to talk of a want of the confidence of the Houſe of Commons in the Miniſter; but it is fit for honeſt men to conſider what is to be the effect of a want of the confidence of the people in the Repreſentatives of the people. A ſpirit of diſunion and diſſention is already gone abroad: jealouſies, that the intereſt of a party in the ſtate is preferred

to the public intereſt, prevail univerſally: the murmuring and diſſatisfaction which have reached my ears in private, are ſucceeded by public and ſolemn diſavowals by the people of the meaſures of their Repreſentatives. Such a ſeparation of intereſts is, indeed, *contrary to conſtitutional principles, and injurious to the intereſts of his Majeſty and his people.*

He who can ſuggeſt the means to extricate the Houſe out of the difficulties of this ſituation, will deſerve well of the public.

A partition treaty between Mr. P—— and Mr. F——, under the mediation of the Gentlemen of the St. Alban's, may have this good effect, if it produces no other; and in that view of it I wiſh ſucceſs to that negotiation.

But

But I confeſs I ſhould have been better ſatisfied, if the reſtoring to the Houſe its honour and its independence---if the re-uniting of it to the people---had been the primary object of that very reſpectable body of men, who have interpoſed to bring about a ſettlement of, what I conſider as comparatively, a very ſmall point indeed.

The courſe which I ſhould have taken the liberty to have pointed out to them as leading moſt directly to that object, would have been the UNION OF ALL HONEST MEN FOR THE PURPOSE OF BREAKING THE COALITION, AND RESCINDING THESE OBNOXIOUS VOTES.

The Houſe being thus reſtored to its freedom, and the firſt uſe of it being to tread back thoſe ſteps which under that diſgraceful force had been taken, I ſhould feel very

little anxiety concerning who is to be the King's Miniſter in this country.

This object unattained, I look forward with the moſt ſerious apprehenſions; I almoſt deſpair of the commonwealth.

The Houſe involved in difficulties inextricable—this bold, determined, deſperate adventurer, goading it on to more difficulties—urging the falſe ſteps it has taken as an argument for hazarding a further and a more dangerous ſtride—the real difficulty of going on—of ſtanding ſtill—or of retreating—ſuch a choice of embarraſſments preſent to my view a proſpect which I know not how to contemplate with a ſteady eye.

Had not the private intereſt of a faction entirely overborne all conſideration of what was due to the Houſe—all attention to its dignity

dignity—it is impoſſible that it ſhould have been committed upon ſuch untenable ground.

If it really was in the contemplation of the new Miniſters to diſſolve the Parliament immediately on their acceſſion to power; it is no ſlight proof of the ſagacity of theſe very *young men*. They muſt have foreſeen what older men could not have believed to be poſſible; that a Houſe of Commons, inſtead of going on with the public buſineſs, which is their duty, would be buſying itſelf with the unmaking and making of the King's Miniſters, which is not only not their duty, but contrary to their duty; that there would be a Man to be found who could perſuade the Houſe to ſubmit to be conducted to the verge of a precipice, where we now ſee it, with the ground breaking away from under it every moment.

What

What is to be done next? I ſuppoſe we ſhall have more angry votes—perhaps a perſonal vote of cenſure on Mr. P—.

I am miſtaken in Mr. P—, if he is not a man of ſo right a mind, as to feel infinitely more for the Houſe, than for himſelf, if the phrenſy of the hour ſhould make ſo groſs an act of violence and injuſtice practicable. As far as Mr. P— is perſonally intereſted in ſuch a vote, it is a conſummation devoutly to be wiſhed. He would ſee his enemies ſinking under that load of diſgrace and infamy, which follow cloſe upon flagrant injuſtice inflicted by the hand of power. He knows that our happy conſtitution hath ſo tempered authority with juſtice in this country, that, let the form of it be ever ſo tremendous, and its texture ever ſo firm, it crumbles and is reduced to duſt and aſhes, the inſtant that cementing principle is extracted from it.

It is childiſh to ſuppoſe that a vote of ſuch a nature ſhould advance Mr. F— one ſtep towards his point, which is terrifying Mr. P— into a reſignation. The Houſe are therefore TO PROCEED. After reſolving that the continuance of this Adminiſtration is contrary to the principles of the conſtitution; which is not very indirectly charging the King with having violated the conſtitution, by continuing his Miniſters in office; I preſume it will hardly occur to Mr. F— to addreſs his Majeſty upon the ſubject: but ſhould ſuch an addreſs be preſented, Mr. F— has furniſhed the materials for an anſwer. *The hardieſt of the rankeſt Whigs*, he tells us, *will not deny the right inherent in the prerogative, the admitted and eſtabliſhed right of the executive branch of the conſtitution, to elect its own Miniſters.*

Nothing then remains but to tack Mr. F— to a money bill.

And

And are we then to come to this ridiculous concluſion of a ſtruggle, in which the Commons of great Britain in Parliament aſſembled have been the principal actors? God forbid! I truſt their conduct will be more dignified; that they will retreat in time, and mark their ſenſe of the conduct they have been influenced to adopt, by withdrawing their confidence from the man who has abuſed it. I truſt they will feel the miſchief of repoſing ſuch unlimited confidence in any man; and that it will never more be repeated in that Houſe, that it is neceſſary, that any man, or ſet of men, in any ſituation whatſoever, ſhould have the confidence of that Houſe.

You have not been uſed to this language; it is not parliamentary: but let me repeat again to you, don't let us be cheated out of our ſenſes by cant words. I am ready to go along with you as far as I ought. If you

you mean to aſk me, whether I hold, that the confidence of the Houſe, or the reprobation, which is another fine-ſounding word, is nothing to a Miniſter, aſſure yourſelf I am not ſo abſurd: I hold it to be one of the greateſt misfortunes that a Miniſter can ſuſtain, to *have drawn down upon himſelf* the diſpleaſure of that Houſe. He will feel the weight of it in every ſtep he takes; and if it be permanent, he muſt ſink under it.

It is not contrary to the principles of the conſtitution that ſuch a Miniſter ſhould continue in office; but it is contrary to the nature of things, that he ſhould chuſe to continue, or that the King ſhould permit him to continue.

If the ordinary effect of the diſpleaſure of the Houſe of Commons, naturally and weightily expreſſed in the conduct of

 buſineſs

buſineſs in Parliament, ſhould not induce ſuch a Miniſter to reſign, the Houſe have their undoubted right of offering humble advice to the King, to remove an obnoxious Miniſter from his preſence and councils: and ſuch advice will ordinarily be irreſiſtible, not in point of authority, but from its intrinſic weight; for a Houſe of Parliament will not ordinarily offer ſuch advice, BUT UPON SUCH PUBLIC GROUND AS WILL CONVINCE ALL THE WORLD OF THE WISDOM, THE TRUTH, AND THE JUSTICE OF IT.

You will tell me, that, upon my own principles, it is ſufficiently inconvenient and hazardous, if it be not unconſtitutional, to take the Adminiſtration in the face of the majority of the Houſe of Commons: I agree that it is ſo; and that the prudence and the good ſenſe of the meaſure is only to be defended upon the new and extraordinary

dinary circumſtances of the times---the peculiarities of the introduction of the Miniſters into office---in ſhort, upon the very grounds which, by the help of perverſion, diſtortion, and management, have been made the articles of its impeachment.

Here Mr. F— and Mr. P— come to the point. On one ſide, it is ſaid, that Secret Influence has procured the diſmiſſion of an Adminiſtration who poſſeſſed the confidence of Parliament, and were purſuing conſtitutional meaſures for the public good. On the other ſide, it is ſaid, that the change in the Adminiſtration has been effected in the ſame manner in which all other changes have been effected, and upon theſe great conſtitutional grounds, to reſcue the King, the Parliament, and the People, out of the hands of a faction, made up by an odious combination of parties, who, after worrying one another, and ruining the country

between them, at length agreed to make a decent proſcription of all their old principles, and to proceed upon the new one of governing the country by the force of their combined ſtrength.

The allegation on that ſide I have already demonſtrated, to your ſatisfaction, to be mere colour and artifice, calculated to revive old prejudices, and to operate upon weak minds. Let us ſee what proof is to be brought in ſupport of the allegation on this ſide.

The hiſtory of the laſt ten years furniſhes proofs in abundance of the exiſtence of the two parties who compoſe the famous Coalition. To their ſpeeches I refer you for the evidence of their cordial deteſtation of each other: you will there find Mr. F— and the noble Lord expreſſing their opinions each of the other in ſuch unequivocal

terms,

terms, as nothing but the convenient diſtinction between perſonal affronts and political abuſe could have enabled any man of ſpirit to digeſt.

To which of theſe parties belongs the demerit of having reduced this country to the condition in which we now ſee it, is beyond my preſent purpoſe to enquire. They have each endeavoured to throw it upon their adverſary: both agree, that between them the country is undone.

And this, it ſeems, is the preciſe moment when the difference between Mr. F— and the noble Lord is obviated; THE RUINS OF THEIR COUNTRY ARE THE FOUNDATIONS UPON WHICH THEIR TEMPLE OF CONCORD IS TO BE ERECTED.

We have been told, that neither party has abandoned its old principles. Mr. F— ſays,

ſays, that with the American war ended his quarrel with the noble Lord: I am not ſatisfied that that quarrel began or ended with the American war: I believe it began, becauſe the noble Lord was too milky in the buſineſs of the printers; and I believe it ended, becauſe Mr. F— found it convenient to quarrel with another noble Lord.

But giving Mr. F— credit for the cauſe of the beginning and of the ending of his quarrel, in the manner he is pleaſed to ſtate it, let us ſee whether it was poſſible for a man to avow the deſertion of every principle which appeared to have regulated his conduct in *oppoſition*, in terms more explicit and intelligible. Once more turn to Mr. Debrett's volumes; hear this Gentleman proteſting, for eight or ten years together, againſt every ſtep taken in that fatal war---fixing upon the noble

Lord's

Lord's reſponſibility for all the blood ſhed in it---for all the public money expended in it---for all the territories and countries torn by it from the imperial Crown of theſe realms.

Do not theſe principles demand, that, as ſoon as the dreadful account is cloſed, and the horrible extent of the evil is aſcertained, there ſhould be an enquiry into the expenditure of one hundred and twenty millions, the loſs of one hundred thouſand ſubjects, and the ſeparation of thirteen provinces from the Britiſh Empire? And is not enquiry ſo completely obviated by this unprincipled Coalition, that there is now nobody that thinks of an enquiry but poor Mr. Martin? I confeſs, the noble Lord makes a very good ſtand againſt that Gentleman, whenever he names *enquiry:* he provokes *enquiry* with all the confidence which belongs to conſcious innocence; and,

and, if he had neither ſought nor accepted a connection with the only man who could conduct it with effect againſt him, I might have concluded, that his Lordſhip did not wiſh to ſcreen himſelf from *enquiry*.

Mr. F— has the prudence to avoid mentioning the word *enquiry*.

Beyond the quarrel upon the ſcore of the American war, it ſeems theſe perſonages did formerly differ upon another point: the Right Honourable Gentleman was of opinion, that the influence of the Crown in Parliament was too great; the noble Lord thought the influence of the Crown in Parliament was not great enough. They ſay they have not abandoned theſe their principles: it would have puzzled ordinary men to have reconciled them;---theſe able negotiators hit upon a moſt admirable expedient, which was, to ESTABLISH AN INFLUENCE IN THEMSELVES, WHICH MIGHT GOVERN

VERN THE PARLIAMENT, AND OVER-POWER THE CROWN.

The independence of Parliament, and the influence of the Crown, thus happily harmonized, things were going on in a very good train, it muſt be confeſſed! Nothing was wanting to complete the ſyſtem of the Coalition but ſtability, and this depended altogether upon opening ſuch new ſources of influence in the leaders of it, as might always afford a plentiful ſupply to thoſe thirſty channels through which it was to flow.

In this view, Mr. F—'s Eaſt-India Bill was a *great ſtroke* indeed, as it ſecured to thoſe two leaders a fund of patronage inexhauſtible, and therefore bid fair to perpetuate THEIR DOMINION over this country.

This meaſure was propoſed and carried up to the point where it failed in the very higheſt ſtyle of this uſurped power. In the eſtabliſhment of the *Septemviri*, not only the conſtitution of the country was violated, by the introduction of a power unknown to it, but, in the manner of doing it, public virtue and national pride were trampled upon; not even the decency of a ballot was obſerved: the names were dictated, inſolently dictated, by one man, who laughed in the faces of the Committee while he was doing it.

Since the Bill was thrown out, and it has been thought prudent to endeavour to ſoften it; our underſtandings alſo have been inſulted with an argument drawn from the reſpectable name at the head of this new executive power, WHICH WAS TO DIVIDE WITH OUR SOVEREIGN.

I will

I will diſmiſs that argument with this ſimple declaration : I am ſincerely diſpoſed to give the noble Earl credit for as many virtues in office as can be exerciſed by one who is cloſely connected with a party in this country---and for no more.

It was an argument for Mr. F—, ſpeaking of Mr. P—, to ſay, " I venerate the character of the *young* man who holds the reins of Government at preſent ; I admire his virtues, and reſpect his abilities ; but, as he is the creature of Secret Influence, I reprobate his Adminiſtration."

In the ſame train of reaſoning, I venerate the character of the noble Earl who was put at the head of the fourth order attempted to be eſtabliſhed in this country ; I admire his virtues, and reſpect his abilities ; but, as he is *the creature of the Coalition*, I reprobate his appointment. The

 difference

difference in the weight of theſe arguments lies here: Mr. P— is not the creature of Secret Influence; the noble Lord was the creature of the Coalition. When I ſay creature, I am far from meaning any thing perſonally offenſive to the noble Lord; I mean only, that he owes his political exiſtence to the Coalition; and I mean to draw this concluſion from that fact, that his very virtues, his honour (according to all modern acceptation of honour), will oblige him to act with the Coalition; and I mean to inſiſt, that the idea inſinuated by Mr. F—, that he had put any thing out of his own reach, by putting this noble Earl's name into the commiſſion, is an inſult to our underſtanding.

When the mine was ſprung (to uſe Lord N——'s words), and thoſe proud works, which had been raiſed by theſe able engineers againſt the conſtitution, were ruined,

ruined, Mr. F— aſſerted, that there then exiſted in this country a *civil war* without *bloodſhed.* May I not aſk you, whether, before that fortunate event took place, there was not in this country a GOVERNMENT BY FORCE, WITHOUT DRAGOONS? If there was, the allegations on this ſide are made good, and the extraordinary ſituation of public affairs juſtify the meaſure of taking Adminiſtration in the face of a majority of the Houſe of Commons, upon the great conſtitutional ground of reſcuing the King, the Parliament, and the People, from a ſtate of perfect ſlavery: and I will indulge a hope, that the new Miniſters will ſtand their ground; that they will carry on the executive government in a conſtitutional courſe, with the confidence of the King, *his perſonal and his political confidence:* that I may not be diſtinguiſhed away,---not with the confidence of the two Houſes of Parliament (for it is a term which cannot be uſed with propriety,

propriety, as applied to Parliament), but with the cordial aſſiſtance of the two Houſes of Parliament, to that extent which, in their grave judgment, after ſober and diligent inveſtigation, the neceſſities of the country ſhall call for; and which neither the character or the conduct of his Majeſty's Servants in the Adminiſtration of his Government ſhall furniſh a clear and ſatisfactory ground for withholding.

Ten thouſand votes will never prove the continuance of ſuch an Adminiſtration to be contrary to the principles of the conſtitution; and until that is proved, or ſome other legal and conſtitutional ground of objection is made out, IT MUST BE CONTRARY TO THE PRINCIPLES OF THE CONSTITUTION FOR A HOUSE OF PARLIAMENT TO ENDEAVOUR TO FORCE THE KING'S MINISTERS TO LEAVE HIS SERVICE.

My Starling too ſhall be taught to repeat the

the word *Coalition*---THAT *is the* SOURCE FROM WHENCE THESE BITTER WATERS FLOW.

The Houſe of Commons, in its own proper character, that of an independent Houſe of Parliament, could not have framed an objection to the appointment of Mr. P— to the office he now fills: he would have been received with the reſpect which is due to the rank which he holds in his Majeſty's Councils. With ſuch a Houſe of Commons, it would have weighed nothing that Mr. F— and Lord N— had rather have kept their places than have gone out; and, if they had attempted to throw unneceſſary obſtructions in the way of his Majeſty's new ſervants, the reſolutions of ſuch a Houſe would have informed them, that the Houſe of Commons doth acknowledge the inherent right of the Crown to appoint the Miniſters of the Crown; and that ſuch a Houſe will neither

directly

directly nor indirectly incroach upon that right, but, on the contrary, will be as careful in maintaining and defending it, as they will be of maintaining and defending their own privileges.

Not even the power of deciding the ſtruggle for the government of the Britiſh empire would have been a temptation to ſuch a Houſe to tranſgreſs the line of its conſtitutional influence in the ſtate. Need I add, that to ſuch a Houſe, reſolved into a Committee on the State of the Nation, with ſuch a man as Mr. Huſſey in the chair, no man would have dared to propoſe that it ſhould mix in a little paltry intrigue for the Chancellorſhip of the Duchy of Lancaſter.

It could never be in the power of intereſted, of deſigning, or of intemperate men, to draw ſuch a Houſe into difficulties: ſuch a Houſe would maintain its dignity by carefully

carefully keeping within the bounds of its authority; ſuch a Houſe would preſerve the confidence of its conſtituents by ſacrificing to it every private conſideration, and by being always mindful, that, inſtead of compoſing the ſuite of a Miniſter, they are the Repreſentatives of the People. Such a Houſe this country would have been bleſſed with at this hour, if this detetted Coalition had not extinguiſhed every ſpark of public ſpirit, deadened all ſenſe of honour, and rendered all profeſſions of attachment to the conſtitution perfectly ridiculous and contemptible. *Ye ſhall know the tree by its fruits.* We have been witneſſes, ſince the late change in the Adminiſtration, to a ſtruggle for power within yonder walls, on the ſide of the Coalition, ſo indecent, ſo acrimonious, ſo deſperate, that the dignity of the Houſe, the maxims of juſtice, and the principles of the conſtitution, have been ſacrificed to that one object; and ſo long as the Coa-

lition can preſerve its aſcendency, we muſt expect that things will be every day growing worſe. We are deviating every hour further and further from the line of the conſtitution; and even the endeavours of honeſt men to recover and reſtore ſome degree of order and government amongſt us, are ſtrongly tinctured with the irregularities which I am lamenting. In any other hour, a private meeting of certain individual Members of the Houſe of Commons, for the purpoſe, in effect, of determining for the King who ſhall be his Miniſters, would have been deemed a moſt portentous prodigy, threatening a total change in our Conſtitution. I am perſuaded that this meeting has proceeded upon the pureſt motives, and with a very ſincere deſire of ſerving his Majeſty and the Public: but I cannot help recommending to them to conſider what it is they are negotiating for; that they are aiming at dividing, by a partition treaty, that which is the acknowledged

ſole

ſole right of their Sovereign to confer as he ſhall think fit. I have already hinted that there is an object to which their honeſt endeavours might be pointed, without going out of the ſtrict line of their duty, or departing in any degree from the ſituation in which the conſtitution has placed them: let them unite to break the power of the Coalition, to bring the Houſe back from wandering beyond their lines to the conſideration of the meaſures which the King's Miniſters ſhall propoſe to them, inſtead of conſidering who it is that the King is to make his Miniſter. I would wiſh theſe Gentlemen to remember what is due to themſelves as well as to the Houſe: there is nothing ſo hazardous as the interfering in matters which are out of our ſphere, and beyond our power to controul. It may ſuit the purpoſes of a faction to riſque involving the Houſe in more irregularities; and there is ſomething ſo inflammatory, and therefore

ſo likely to prevail in a popular aſſembly, in urging how diſhonourable and how ſhameful it would be for the Houſe now to give way, that additional irregularities may be preſſed upon them with too much proſpect of ſucceſs: but let honeſt men reſolve to make their ſtand here, and before they proceed farther, let them be ſatisfied as to the ground they are upon. The examination will be a very ſhort one. If the Houſe are within the line of their duty, they will find it very diſtinctly marked what is to be done next. Is it propoſed to them to paſs a law beneficial to the public?--they have power to paſs it.---Are they aſked to reject an unwiſe and impolitic bill? they can reject it.---Are aids demanded of them by the Crown? they have power to grant or to refuſe them.---Is it expedient that they ſhould offer humble advice to his Majeſty? they are intitled to an audience.—Is a corrupt Miniſter to be proceeded againſt in Parliament?

liament? they can impeach him. But ſhould it be propoſed to them that the King's Miniſter ought not to continue in adminiſtration, becauſe his eye is too piercing, or his noſe not ſufficiently aquiline; they cannot vote him out of his office, for the cleareſt of all reaſons—It belongs to a Houſe of Commons to conſent to laws---to grant aids---to give advice---to prefer impeachments. IT DOES NOT BELONG TO A HOUSE OF COMMONS TO APPOINT, OR DETERMINE THE APPOINTMENTS OF MINISTERS.

In puſhing the Houſe to one more extravagancy, the faction may have an intereſt to ſerve; they may hope to carry their point by it, which they will think *the honour of the Houſe well worth riſquing for*. If they are aſked, *what if the Miniſter ſhould not reſign?* they have an anſwer ready, which may ſatisfy ſome people: *It is impoſſible they can ſtand againſt the Houſe of Commons.* But why

why impoſſible? Can the Houſe of Commons expel a Miniſter from the Treaſury? Can they vote Mr. F— duly elected Firſt Lord, and order the Clerk of the Crown to attend and amend the King's letters patent? If not, what is to hinder the Miniſter's going on? It ſeems to me that the operation of the vote is upon the nerves of the Miniſter, and not upon his patent; and I can conceive nothing more hopeleſs, than the expectation, that the Miniſter, who has continued in Adminiſtration from the 16th to the preſent hour, ſhould be frightened out of it by any new aſſurances, in whatever form of words they may be conveyed, that the Houſe of Commons continue to be of opinion that Mr. F— would be a Miniſter more agreeable to them. Let me be allowed then to ſuppoſe, that what they ſay is impoſſible will happen; that Mr. P— will not be ſo civil as to deſire Mr. F— to be ſo good as to take his

place.

place. The Coalition are but where they were; they riſk nothing but *the ſhare of credit they have with the people:* but what will be the ſituation of the Houſe of Commons? Exaſperated to madneſs, in the paroxyſm of rage and diſappointment, they may refuſe to go on with the public buſineſs —they may diſband the army—they may revenge themſelves upon themſelves, by doing irreparable miſchief to the public; but they can neither vindicate the ſteps which they have taken, nor is there one conſtitutional ſtep which remains to be taken to enforce them.

Conſidering the numbers of which the Coalition is compoſed, I have reflected with aſtoniſhment upon their having been kept together for ſo great a length of time, and after a public diſcuſſion of theſe topics. The reaſoning of the ableſt ſpeakers on their ſide has been ſo flimſy, ſo frivolous, they have

have been obliged to employ ſo many diſtinctions, and to uſe ſo many circumlocutions, in order to ſurround a few plain and ſimple propoſitions, upon which the whole queſtion reſts;—the reſolutions which have been carried, have been framed with ſo much ſtudied obſcurity and quaintneſs of expreſſion;—that it is impoſſible to believe, that able men, uſing ſuch language, could feel themſelves right, and very difficult to imagine how they could impoſe upon the underſtandings of others. They are obliged to admit, without qualification or reſerve, that it is a right inherent in the prerogative to chuſe its own Miniſters. But, ſays Mr. F—, Is it not the privilege of this Houſe, and of Parliament, to decide on the conduct of Adminiſtration, on the peculiarity of their introduction into office, and on thoſe circumſtances which either entitle them to the confidence or the reprobation of the Houſe? I ſay, No.

Theſe

Theſe propoſitions are ſo dangerouſly looſe and indefinite, that they claim for the Houſe of Commons and Parliament a power over the King and his Miniſters, as boundleſs as it is new and unconſtitutional. With a very ſincere reſpect for both Houſes of Parliament, I hold that we have a much better judge to decide upon the conduct of Adminiſtration. THE LAW OF THE LAND IS THAT JUDGE, in ſome caſes declared and adminiſtered in the Houſe of Lords, in their judicature upon an impeachment by the Commons; in caſes of leſs moment, by the ordinary courſe of the judicature of the country. As to the *peculiarity of the introduction of Miniſters into office*, thank God, we have no ſuch fantaſtical juriſdiction in the Houſe of Commons or elſewhere, as a juriſdiction of *peculiarities as to circumſtances which ſhould either entitle Miniſters to the confidence or reprobation of the Houſe*; there exiſts no power of deciding upon

them any where. Confidence and reprobation are mere perſonal feelings, never to be defined by a vote; and they are ſuch as no majority can conclude themſelves, much leſs the Houſe upon.

And it is ſo far from being derogatory to the true dignity of the Houſe to deny it a power of indulging caprice, or of aſſiſting intrigue, cabal, and faction, by interfering in a matter which belongs to the executive government altogether, that nothing can ſo effectually contribute to ſupport the Houſe in the exerciſe of that conſtitutional controul which it really poſſeſſes. A corrupt Miniſter will tremble when he hears the voice of an independent Houſe of Commons; but if a faction in that Houſe ſhall have placed him in that ſituation, that voice can never be heard. It is not I that degrade the Houſe of Commons. Would to God there were nobody more diſ-

diſpoſed than I am to ſacrifice the honour of that Houſe to their own private views! I wiſh to ſee it free and independent, and having the confidence of the people, powerful enough to carry its reſolutions into execution: but if nothing will ſatisfy but a power directly or indirectly of making the Officers and Miniſters of the executive government, that power it has not; and in whatever ſhape, under whatever guard in the expreſſion it is aſſerted, this it is that is contrary to the principles of the conſtitution.

Firmly as the Coalition may be ſuppoſed to be united, concerning which I have my ſuſpicions, I repeat, it muſt be broken. THERE IS NO PEACE FOR THIS COUNTRY, NO SECURITY FOR THE CONSTITUTION, OR FOR THE PRIVATE RIGHT OF THE SUBJECT, TILL THE COALITION IS BROKEN. People deceive themſelves, if they hope to bring about a re-eſtabliſhment of a firm government, by piecing a third party into it.

Mr. F-- ſays rightly, there can be no ſolid union, unleſs it be a union of principles. How he contrived to unite with his noble coadjutor, holding that opinion, and having the principles which for ten years together he had pledged himſelf to act upon, he beſt knows; but that there ſhould be a union of principle between the man who could unite with a Miniſter, who had for ten years exhibited ſuch damning proofs of perfect incapacity or ſomething worſe, and any man who has pretenſions to public virtue, fair fame, a ſpotleſs and unſullied character, ſeems to me much beyond the reach of HIS GRACE'S EXPEDIENT.'

The Gentlemen of the St. Alban's are negotiating a hollow peace, when they ſhould be waging a ſucceſsful war. Let them break the Coalition! When that is done, individuals, who have talents, may be brought forward into the ſeveral departments of the

public

public ſervice, in a regular and conſtitutional courſe. The great councils of the nation will no longer be employed in the myſteries of a conclave.

I hinted juſt now a ſuſpicion, that the union of the members of the Coalition was more ſpecious than durable. If that be the caſe, it required management and addreſs; nay, there would be a great deal to be riſqued by the leaders, in order to keep their troops together. Perhaps this may be a key to the extraordinary reſolutions which ſtand upon the Journals of the Houſe of Commons.

Conſidering them as mere political meaſures, beyond ſecuring the point of the diſſolution, there ſeems to be no common ſenſe in them.

But if the troops are in a diſpoſition to mutiny, it becomes neceſſary to lead them into imme-

immediate actual ſervice. The leader dare not wait the event of regular approaches: if the enemy will not ſurrender the place, he muſt hazard an aſſault, or his men will deſert. They cannot bear to leave their warm beds, to lie upon the cold ground in this inclement ſeaſon, during the tedious operations of a ſiege, much leſs of a blockade. Thoſe ſeemingly raſh and extravagant motions were, I ſuſpect, abſolutely neceſſary to keep their people together; to keep alive the hope of getting back again to their old quarters.

Another uſe of theſe reſolutions, perhaps equally neceſſary, ſeems to have been to inflame the Houſe to ſuch a degree, as to make them incapable of attending to any ſober repreſentation that ſhould be made to them upon the real ſtate of this queſtion, in a grave, conſtitutional view of it.

In any view of them, in my mind, they betoken deſpair in the leader, and I verily think

think the power of the Coalition is drawing to its period. THERE MAY BE ANOTHER CONVULSION BEFORE IT EXPIRES, but it hath received its death's wound; and if it will be any conſolation to it, to hear me acknowledge that it could have periſhed by its own ſword only, I am ready to confeſs that it has worked its own deſtruction.

It has been much debated without door, whether, if Mr. F— ſhould decline, or ſhould poſtpone any longer the following up his former reſolutions with more hard words, Mr. P— ſhould not bring forward a motion to reſcind thoſe which the Houſe have already come to upon the ſubject of his adminiſtration? As an individual, I could not ſubmit to ſit for one vacant hour in that Houſe, without moving to RESCIND THOSE RESOLUTIONS, AS THE ONLY MEANS OF RESTORING TO THE HOUSE THE CONFIDENCE OF ITS CONSTITUENTS, IN

WHICH

WHICH ITS DIGNITY, NAY ITS AUTHORITY CONSISTS.

This would be the conduct of a man intirely abſtracted from the world and its connexions, jealous for the honour of that Houſe, which is the bulwark of the liberties of the people.

As a partizan, or even entertaining a wiſh to ſee Mr. P--- the Miniſter, rather than Mr. F--, I might think it neceſſary to wait a few days longer for a moment favourable to the diſcuſſion of ſuch a queſtion. If Mr. F-- poſtpones any further motion on his part, in the hope that Mr. P--- may be provoked to leave his intrenchment, and to make a movement for the purpoſe of attacking at a diſadvantage, I hope he will be diſappointed: it may be a more prudent line of conduct for Mr. P--to forget that ſuch reſolutions had paſſed; to aſſume that no more are intended

intended to be paſſed; and to devote his attention to the proper duties of his ſtation, among which is the preparing for the conſideration of Parliament ſuch meaſures as are neceſſary for the country, and are proper to be brought forward by thoſe members who fill the great reſponſible offices which belong to the executive Government.

Among theſe, it has been very much the faſhion to conclude, that a bill for the regulation of India affairs is of the moſt preſſing neceſſity; and it has been ſuppoſed, that the rejection of Mr. P---'s India bill (which certainly had the merit of having leſs harm in it than Mr. F--'s bill had) was an alarming ſymptom of Mr. P---'s inability to carry on the Government.

I know not but I may be ſingle in my opinion upon this ſubject; but it is my ſincere opinion, that the rejection of both thoſe

bills has been a moſt fortunate circumſtance for the public, whoſe intereſts are deeply interwoven with thoſe of the Eaſt-India Company.

People have been told ſo often, that, unleſs ſomething effectual is done, the Eaſt Indies will be loſt to this country, that they believe it. I take the Eaſt-India Company to be in the condition of a patient, who, having been practiſed upon by a ſucceſſion of medical men, has at length been tormented into a fever. The doctors chuſing to hold their conſultations in his room, day by day, and hour by hour, he has been exhauſted for want of reſt. Of late he has taken no medicine; becauſe his phyſicians (though they have talked of his having every diſorder that the human frame is ſubject to) could not agree how to treat his caſe. This reſpite has produced its ordinary effect---a criſis has taken place in his favour---nature has

has done the work for him---his fever is gone; and though it has conſiderably reduced him (eſpecially under his ſtrict regimen, which perhaps his conſtitution may require), he wants nothing but wholeſome kitchen phyſic to reſtore him. Is this a moment for a raſh empiric to be allowed to doſe him with ſtrong mercurials, under pretence of working a radical cure? One doctor ſays, By G—d he ſhall take my phyſic, or ſtarve; nay, he ſhall not have that alternative; I will cram it down his throat. Will nobody ſave this poor wretch from being ſo treated? He will do very well, if they will but let phyſic alone. A few jellies, and ſome cordial draughts, are all that his preſent condition requires.

Without a figure, I wiſh to call the attention of the public to the ſuppoſed neceſſity---the juſtice---the policy---the good ſenſe of any parliamentary interpoſition in

the preſent hour for the regulation of our poſſeſſions in Aſia. If theſe were times for taking this ſubject into conſideration, I would go farther, and propoſe to take the better courſe of undoing in Parliament all that has been done by Parliament, under the head of regulation, for the laſt ten or twelve years, with a very few exceptions. One of thoſe exceptions ſhould be the controul given to the King's Miniſters by the late act for renewing the charter, which I think was a wiſe and neceſſary meaſure.

The Eaſt-India Company have the ordinary adminiſtration of India affairs: they treat with the country powers; they levy war; they make peace. Government is immediately intereſted in this branch of their adminiſtration: it has an influence beyond Aſia; it conſtitutes, therefore, a very eſſential part of that which ought to be one entire political ſyſtem. And in as much as the

ſervants

ſervants of the Company in India, nay the Court of Directors at home, can form no judgment of the effect of their political meaſures beyond their own branch of the ſyſtem; and as the ſprings which regulate the general machine lie beyond their view; with the beſt judgment and the beſt intentions, they might err for want of information. There was good ſenſe, therefore, and a political neceſſity for authorizing the King's Miniſters to inſtruct the ſervants of the Company upon political ſubjects; and I humbly conceive, that this controul is ſufficient to anſwer every honeſt purpoſe of Government, and every uſeful purpoſe that can be ſuggeſted of a parliamentary regulation at this time.

The points which are of real magnitude and importance in our Eaſt-India affairs at this hour, are points of public policy only; ſuch

ſuch as the ſettlement of countries ravaged and depopulated in the courſe of a ruinous war—the reform of the different eſtabliſhments in India—the conduct to be purſued in future with the country powers—the alliances to be formed---and ſuch other political arrangement as the preſent ſtate of the government of India may require. All theſe, and every other political point, may be regulated in a conſtitutional, and, what is more intelligible, in a practicable way, by means of a regular confidential communication with the ſupreme executive power, and under the conſtant inſpection and controul of its reſponſible Miniſters. A parliamentary regulation upon ſuch ſubjects may be likewiſe conſtitutional, but will not be very practicable.

With ſubmiſſion, a Houſe of Parliament, with all the information it can derive from reading and examining, is likely to prove

but

but an incompetent judge of what is fit to be done, in the ſhape of a poſitive law, for the government of a country ſo remote, and in other reſpects ſo ſingularly circumſtanced. The difficulty of adapting poſitive laws of a Britiſh frame and texture to theſe remote countries, to be interwoven into a Government hitherto purely deſpotic, and to be made a rule of conduct for the governors of a people who differ ſo widely from us in point of climate, manners, and religion--- might ſtagger a very bold man, if he happened to have any ſenſe.

I OWN I CANNOT THINK OF GOVERNING INDIA BY ACT OF PARLIAMENT, WITHOUT SCORN AND CONTEMPT FOR THE IDEA.

Is there common ſenſe in hampering a handful of men, ſent from this country to govern a great empire in Aſia, purely deſpotic

potic in the principle of its conſtitution, with Britiſh Acts of Parliament? The principle of ſuch a government muſt be, that it be ſo conſtituted as to be always in a condition to act with the utmoſt poſſible vigour, energy, and effect.

The moſt obvious idea of ſuch a government is, that it ſhould be in the hands of one man, aſſiſted by a council reſident there, in whom the moſt implicit confidence is to be repoſed, and who ſhall be reſponſible for it here, at the peril of his life and fortune.

Are there abuſes in ſuch a government? Let us take a manly and a legal courſe; call upon the Eaſt-India Company, at their peril, to adminiſter the government in Aſia with more order. If they tell us they want powers, give them the powers they aſk. If they ſtill ſuffer the country to be oppreſt, con-

confiſcate the Directors---the Miniſters of the Company. If that fails of its effect---confiſcate the Company---reſume their charter---THEY HAVE FORFEITED IT. But in the mean time, let the authority and credit of the Eaſt-India Company's government be maintained to the utmoſt; and, above all, do not hamper with improvident Acts of Parliament the wild effuſions of an heated imagination. When we are heaping Act of Parliament upon Act of Parliament for the regulation of India affairs, we are only conſtructing another tower of Babel in the Eaſt.

It ſhould be remembered, that it is not now the queſtion, whether the government of our poſſeſſions in Aſia ought to have been delegated to the Eaſt-India Company. I admit that it is no where propoſed, in any of the theories of government which I have looked into, that a company of merchants

ſhould be permitted to exerciſe the kingly office throughout a vaſt territory. The truth is, that a great variety of circumſtances, which writers could never foreſee or combine in their ſpeculations, have united to form the empire of the Eaſt-India Company in Aſia.

The original object was commerce, not territory---it was commerce with a country diſtant 12000 miles from the ſeat of Government. Abſolute neceſſity, commercial neceſſity, firſt ſuggeſted the idea of carrying on this commerce upon a joint ſtock. Thus a company was formed. The ſame neceſſity drove the Company to make ſettlements at this immenſe diſtance from the Mother country---ſettlements could not exiſt without powers of government.

Had the ſettlements propoſed been of ſufficient magnitude to have attracted the attention

tention of politicians as objects of dominion, probably the political and commercial affairs of Asia would have been originally separated: such is the force of theory. And it is full as probable, that settlements, so made, would have soon dwindled to nothing.

The settlements proposed were not of magnitude---the Crown was neither jealous nor ambitious. The necessary powers of government, therefore, were delegated to the Company.

These grants were made upon grounds of policy that are plain and intelligible. The Company, and the Company only, were interested to support these settlements; and, what is more decisive, they, and only they, could have resources from which such settlements could be supported.

Here, then, we trace the foundations of

the Government of the Eaſt-India Company in Aſia; a Government ſingularly conſtituted, wherein dominion and commerce unite cordially to form the political objects of its rulers. It is obvious, that ſuch a Government could only be conducted by merchants; it has been conducted by merchants with ſucceſs.

It has happened, that, upon this narrow foundation, a ſuperſtructure has been raiſed, which, though irregular in the higheſt degree, and a confuſion of all the orders, is the wonder and aſtoniſhment of ſurrounding nations.

And this ſtupendous fabric as yet ſtands firm upon its baſis.

Let it be remembered, that the Eaſt-India Company, with all their imperfections upon their heads, acquired our territories in Aſia; that

that they have hitherto defended them; that time has given to their Government ſhape, proportion, vigour, and ſtrength; that our Eaſt-India affairs may go on in their old channel for a time without hazard: it muſt be attended with imminent hazard to divert them into a new one. Surely this is not the time to attempt it.

Errors and imperfections doubtleſs there are in ſuch a ſyſtem; many and great enormities may have been committed in the conduct of a government neceſſarily deſpotic, and far removed from obſervation and cenſure. It is folly to hope for a radical cure for theſe diſorders.

Half-meaſures, as they are called, applied with moderation, may palliate them, and perhaps hereafter, in quieter times, may be ſafely adminiſtered.

This

This little eſſay upon India affairs is more than I promiſed you; but the two India Bills, and the apprehenſion of a third, naturally led me to it.

I am confident we have nothing to do but to give the Eaſt-India Company that aſſiſtance, which a pecuniary diſtreſs, brought on by the war, calls for. Our poſſeſſions in Aſia will be ours another year, when we ſhall be more at leiſure, and in better temper, to enquire what further powers of government and of regulation may be fit to be granted to the Eaſt-India Company by authority of Parliament. If, in the mean time, thoſe ineſtimable treaſures, the Reports of the Secret and Select Committees, ſhould happen to be deſtroyed by fire, it would be a misfortune never to be ſufficiently deplored by thoſe who have a taſte for the Sublime and Beautiful; but I truſt the Eaſt-India Company

pany ſtands ſo firm, that it might ſurvive even that misfortune.

I am, &c.

***** ****

*Richmond,*
2 *February*, 1784.

P. S. This moment an account was brought to me, that, after the late ſolemn pauſe of a week, during which the Coalition were pleaſed to put an entire ſtop to the whole buſineſs of the nation in Parliament, they laſt night carried the following motion by a majority of nineteen, in the number of whom were Mr. Powys and Mr. Marſham.

" That it is the opinion of this Houſe, " that the continuance of the preſent Miniſ- " try in power, is an obſtacle to the formation " of ſuch an Adminiſtration as is likely to " have

" have the confidence of this Houſe and the
" people, and as would have a tendency
" to put an end to the preſent diviſions that
" diſtract the country."

Why this is pelting the Miniſter with rotten eggs!

FINIS.